

VZCZCXYZ0003
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIL #0139/01 0221136
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 221136Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1112
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 8913
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 4803
RUEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9461
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 6885
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0878
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 000139

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 22, 2009

Summary: Reports on the new "White House Foreign Policy Agenda" linking "increase in aid to Pakistan to security along Afghan border" dominated headlines in all major dailies on Thursday. Also front-paged were reports that "U.S. President Barack Obama asked prosecutors to seek a suspension of all military trials at the U.S. prison camp in Cuba." President Zadari's welcoming of President Obama's pledge "to seek a new approach with the Muslim world" was highlighted in all newspapers. Reports that "top Al Qaeda operative was among the seven suspected militants held" in Khyber tribal region also received prominent display.

All major English and Urdu language dailies ran detailed editorials on the assumption of Barack Obama to the office of U.S. President. The independent national daily, "Dawn," noted that "the President did not simply make demands from the rest of the world; he acknowledged that America too must change." Another English daily, "The News," observed that "whilst we may take an interest in how President Obama will address his domestic problems, our interest will be far keener in how he tackles foreign policy." The Urdu daily, "Islam," wrote: "The success of President Obama, the global peace and stability, and even the very existence of the United States is directly linked to the change that the U.S. brings about in its policies and the resolution of problems confronting the Muslim countries." Another Urdu daily, "Express," noted that "the world can be turned into a better place in a few years if President Obama implements his vision. The situation would also improve if moderation replaces war-mongering." End Summary.

News Stories

"Obama Links Increase In Aid to Security Along Afghan Border" "Dawn" (01/22)

"U.S. President Barack Obama and Vice-President Joe Biden will increase non-military aid to Pakistan and hold it accountable for security in the border region with Afghanistan, says the new White House foreign policy agenda issued on Wednesday. Afghanistan and Pakistan top this agenda, followed by nuclear weapons, Iran, energy security, Israel, bipartisanship and openness, in that order."

"U.S. Takes First Step Towards Closing Guantanamo" "Dawn" (01/22)

"U.S. military judges on Wednesday deferred the trial of key Guantanamo suspects, hours after President Barack Obama asked prosecutors to seek a suspension of all military trials at the U.S. prison camp in Cuba. Members of the Obama team described his

decision as the first step towards fulfilling a vow to close the controversial 'war on terror' prison."

"Zardari Lauds Obama's 'New Way Forward' Approach" "Dawn" (01/22)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday welcomed a pledge from U.S. President Barack Obama to seek a new approach with the Muslim world after eight turbulent years of the Bush administration, said a statement from the presidency."

"Pakistan To Review Options If U.S. Policy Not Positive" "Daily Times" (01/22)

"If U.S. President Barack Obama's administration does not adopt a positive policy towards Pakistan, the South Asian country will have to review its options, a private TV channel quoted Pakistani Ambassador to the U.S. Hussain Haqqani as saying on Wednesday. Haqqani told the channel that former U.S. President George Bush preferred getting himself heard to listening to others and 'believed in the use of force.' He said that compared to Bush, Obama believed in holding talks. Haqqani hoped that Obama would give a more 'patient hearing' to Pakistan's views, said the channel."

"Hillary Clinton Sworn In As Secretary Of State" "The Nation" (01/22)

"The former first lady and New York Senator, Hillary R. Clinton, was on Thursday sworn in as the Secretary of State within an hour of her being confirmed by the U.S. Senate by an overwhelming majority of 94 to two votes. Clinton would be the 67th Secretary of State replacing Condoleezza Rice of the previous Bush Administration." "U.S. To Name Holbrook As Special Afghan-Pak Envoy" "The Nation" (01/22)

"Richard Holbrook, the former US Ambassador to UN is likely to be appointed envoy to Pakistan, Afghanistan and related matters by the new Obama administration after Hillary Clinton was sworn in as the Secretary of State earlier on Thursday."

"Mixed Views On Obama's Swearing-In" "The News" (01/22)

"Rising expectations about a paradigm shift in the U.S. foreign policy, especially towards the Muslim Ummah, after the swearing-in of Barack Obama as President of the United State on Wednesday evoked mixed reaction from the people.... Some even went to say that nothing would change whether it is George Bush or Barack Obama as the Jewish lobby is in fact in charge of all the American policies and it would not let the new President show any soft corner towards the Muslim world."

"JI Welcomes Obama's Pledge" "Daily Times" (01/22)

"The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) on Wednesday welcomed a pledge from US President Barack Obama seeking a 'new way forward' with the Muslim world. 'We welcome it very much,' said Khurshid Ahmed, a senior leader of the JI."

"'Top Al Qaeda Operative' Held In Khyber Raid" "Dawn" (01/22)

"Seven suspected militants were arrested in a pre-dawn operation in Bara Qadeem area of the Khyber tribal region on Wednesday. According to Reuters, a senior Al Qaeda operative suspected of involvement in the 2005 bombings of London transport system was among the seven. Officials said some foreigners were among the seven arrested by Mehsud Scouts during a raid on the house of a local militant."

"Foreign Troops A Threat To Region: Owais" "Dawn" (01/22)

"NWFP Governor Owais Ahmad Ghani has called for withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, saying that their presence is endangering the security of the entire region. 'The roots of terrorism are based in Afghanistan and not in Pakistan and efforts should be made to control terrorism there,' he said, while speaking at a ceremony held in the Khyber Medical University, Peshawar on Wednesday."

"Foreign Hands Patronizing Militants In Swat, FATA: Malik" "The News" (01/22)

"Terming terrorism a cancer not only for Pakistan but also the entire world, Adviser on Interior Rehman Malik said on Wednesday that foreign hands were patronizing the militants in Swat and Fata areas. 'The government has adopted a strategy to flush out terrorists from Swat and peace would be restored there within a two-week time,' he said in Islamabad."

"Taliban's Mohmand Chief Killed" "Dawn" (01/22)

"Umer Khalid, the Chief of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in the Mohmand tribal region, was killed along with four other key commanders in a military operation in Lakaro area on Wednesday morning, a security official claimed."

"Swat TTP Conditionally Accepts Government's Olive Branch" "The News" (01/22)

"Militants loyal to Maulana Fazlullah on Wednesday expressed their willingness to hold talks with Jamiatul Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman for a negotiated settlement of the Swat problem, but said the government should have the authority to make decisions itself instead of 'taking dictations from Washington.'"

"JI Offers To Mediate Between Militants, Government" "The News" (01/220)

"The Jamaat-e-Islami on Wednesday said it was ready to play an active role in mediating between the government and militants in Swat and elsewhere, if the unanimous resolution adopted by the joint session of parliament was implemented in toto, said provincial President of the Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq while addressing a news conference in Peshawar."

"Five Drones Intrude Into NWA" "The News" (01/22)

"Five U.S. drones on Wednesday intruded into the Pakistani tribal territory in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) after a long gap but no missiles were fired at any target, said a resident of Miramshah."

"Two Schools Destroyed" "Dawn" (01/22)

"Taliban militants destroyed another two government-run schools and a health centre as violence continued in Swat on Wednesday."

"Taliban Demand End To Playing Music In Buses" "Daily Times" (01/22)

"Bus drivers in the NWFP have begun removing audio and video equipment from their vehicles after the Taliban threatened suicide attacks against those who played music or films for passengers, an industry official said on Tuesday."

"NATO Chief In Islamabad" "Dawn" (01/22)

"NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer arrived in Islamabad on Wednesday on a two-day visit during which he is expected to meet President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and the country's military leadership to seek increased cooperation in anti-terror war and better security for the alliance's supply routes."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Yes He Can?," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/22)

"There was no talk of a 'war on terror'; instead, President Obama talked, accurately, of his nation being at war 'against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred.' And offering an olive branch to the Muslim world, he spoke of seeking a new way forward. Even better, the President did not simply make demands from the rest of the world; he acknowledged that America too must change."

"The Morning After," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/22)

"Whilst we may take an interest in how President Obama will address his domestic problems, our interest will be far keener in how he tackles foreign policy. What we have come to expect from Obama is greater frankness and perhaps a tougher approach to some of the knottier problems on the table."

"Barack Obama's Determination To Develop New Relations With Muslim World," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/22)

"The success of President Obama, the global peace and stability, and even the very existence of the United States are directly linked to the change in its policies and the resolution of problems confronting the Muslim countries. If President Obama firmly believes in the right of freedom for every nation, then he must stop drone attacks on Pakistani border areas immediately."

"Bush Leaves Behind A Tale Of Destruction And Devastation; Obama Becomes The Center Of World Expectations," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/22)

"In his inaugural address, President Obama has expressed the desire to improve the state of the world's poor. The world can be turned into a better place in a few years if he implements it. The situation would also improve if moderation replaces war-mongering."

"Commitment To New Way Forward With The Muslim World: New U.S. President Barack Hussein Obama Must Honor His Name," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (01/22)

"While looking for new way forward for good relations with the Muslim world, President Barack Hussein Obama will have to keep in perspective Bush's anti-Muslim policies.... If President Barack Obama wants peace for the sake of a peaceful society at large and wants cooperation from the Muslim world then he will have to withdraw the U.S. troops from Afghanistan besides Iraq. He will also have to stop giving anti-Muslim patronage to India and will have to have good relations with Muslim countries."

"Welcome Obama," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (01/22)

"Pakistan's political and military leadership has conveyed the 'message' to new U.S. administration. Only time will tell as to how President Obama solicits Pakistan's help in maintaining 'peace' in Afghanistan and what assistance he offers to Pakistan in this respect.... The Middle East issue would be the biggest hurdle in the new way forward for relations with the Muslim world."

"Pakistan's Immediate Expectations From Obama" an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/22)

"The first demand the government of Pakistan has from President Obama is an immediate halt to the drone attacks... Pakistan also expects the new President to play a role in reducing the Indo-Pak tension as well as keeping the Kashmir issue resolution on his agenda."

"President Barack Hussein Obama And Hopes of the World" an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 5,000) (01/22)

"The world can change if President Obama restores America's image as a peace-loving nation, and acknowledges the right of every nation to form a democratic system according to its own aspirations."

"U.S. President Obama's Address And Expectations," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (01/21)

"While it is true that the U.S. President has to work on a pre-determined policy, but one must also remember that the U.S. President has a key role in formulating these policies. If only the

policy making institutions were paramount, the U.S. nation and the international community would not have pinned so many hopes on Obama."

"Oath Of Barack Obama - A Momentous Event Of U.S. History," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (01/22)

"President Barack Obama must seek out such Muslim leaders that can bridge the gap between the U.S. and its opponents in the Muslim states. The U.S. will also have to shun exercise of force, and must resort to dialogue process to pave way for peace and tranquility in the world."

"Commendable Announcements Of President Obama; World Looking Forward For Practical Steps," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (01/22)

"Whether the change in Washington Administration will bring any improvement in the bilateral relations and mutual trust between Pakistan and the U.S. will depend on the policies of the Obama Administration."

"A Ray Of Hope," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/22)

"One would assume that a man like him at the helm would be able to take the world out of the stormy seas to the safety of land. But let the world keep its fingers crossed till there are signs of a tangible change in the U.S. attitude to its various issues on the horizon."

"Pledge Of Change," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (01/22)

"In contrast to the relative ease with which he climbed up the ladder to the White House, the presidency is not going to be a bed of roses for him since he confronts many challenges at home and abroad."

"New Era Dawns On U.S. But...", an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/22)

"Though Obama has promised to 'seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect' as far as the Muslim world is concerned, yet in the same breath in a veiled reference he blamed some Muslim States for the ills that are really the product of the direct or indirect U.S. intervention and interference in the internal affairs of the countries and regions. This shows that he was not willing to acknowledge that regional and global unrest and instability was because of the American policies of regime change and pre-emptive strikes and with this kind of approach at least the Muslim world can hardly expect any relief in months and years to come."

"America's First Black President," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (01/23)

"America has changed, and Barack Hussein Obama's election to the country's highest office is the proof. This change was overdue in America, but it had to wait at the doorsteps of the vested interests in politics and business.... Yet hope persists that under President Obama the United States would have a bigger ear to catch what others have to say."

"American Drones And Taliban Terrorism," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/22)

"The decision to find an alternative route was taken after a series of attacks near Peshawar destroyed convoys of large carrier trucks, resulting in theft of equipment by the Taliban. Some thought that the attacks were a reaction to America's refusal to accede to Pakistan's request to stop drone attacks inside the Pakistani territory.... President Obama's policy of beefing up forces in Afghanistan and offering Pakistan an aid package it cannot resist will cause a lot of internal strife in Pakistan. The government

will find the 'package' irresistible, but the army may pay less attention to questions related to the survival of the national economy. Since the media and the public opinion in Pakistan are greatly incensed at drone attacks."

"Change In Thinking: Now It Should Be In Actions," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-right sensationalist Urdu daily "Ummat" (cir. 33,000) (01/22)

"No doubt 44th President of United States, Obama, has written a new chapter in American history. One can welcome President Obama's idea of establishing new relationship with Muslim World but the Muslim countries should not attach much expectations from Obama because Jews tend to influence American politics, media and even military planning."

"Will There Be A Change In the World?," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (01/22)

"So far whatever President Obama has said from his election campaign up to the election victory, there is nothing which can give feeling to Muslims that things would change under his presidency. So the Muslims should not live under any illusions. It is possible that Obama's policies might make a difference internally but for the Muslim World there would be no change."

"A Harbinger Of Change," an op-ed by Shahab Usto in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/22)

"Pakistan occupies a key place in Obama's foreign policy on many counts. Obama intends to wind up the war in Iraq and focus on Afghanistan and FATA.... Pakistan's role critical to the present crisis cannot be overlooked by President Obama. It's heartening that he has pledged an increase in Pakistan's non-military aid and openly supported a resolution of the Kashmir dispute at a time when the Indo-U.S. romance is blooming. Yet, the proof of pudding is in the eating. The U.S. must translate these promises into action." Patterson